

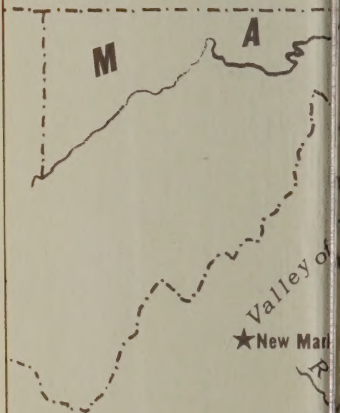
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June 10th 1864

Hoosier Farm Boy in Lincoln's Army



The Civil War Letters
of Pvt. John R. McClure
of the 14th Indiana Regiment

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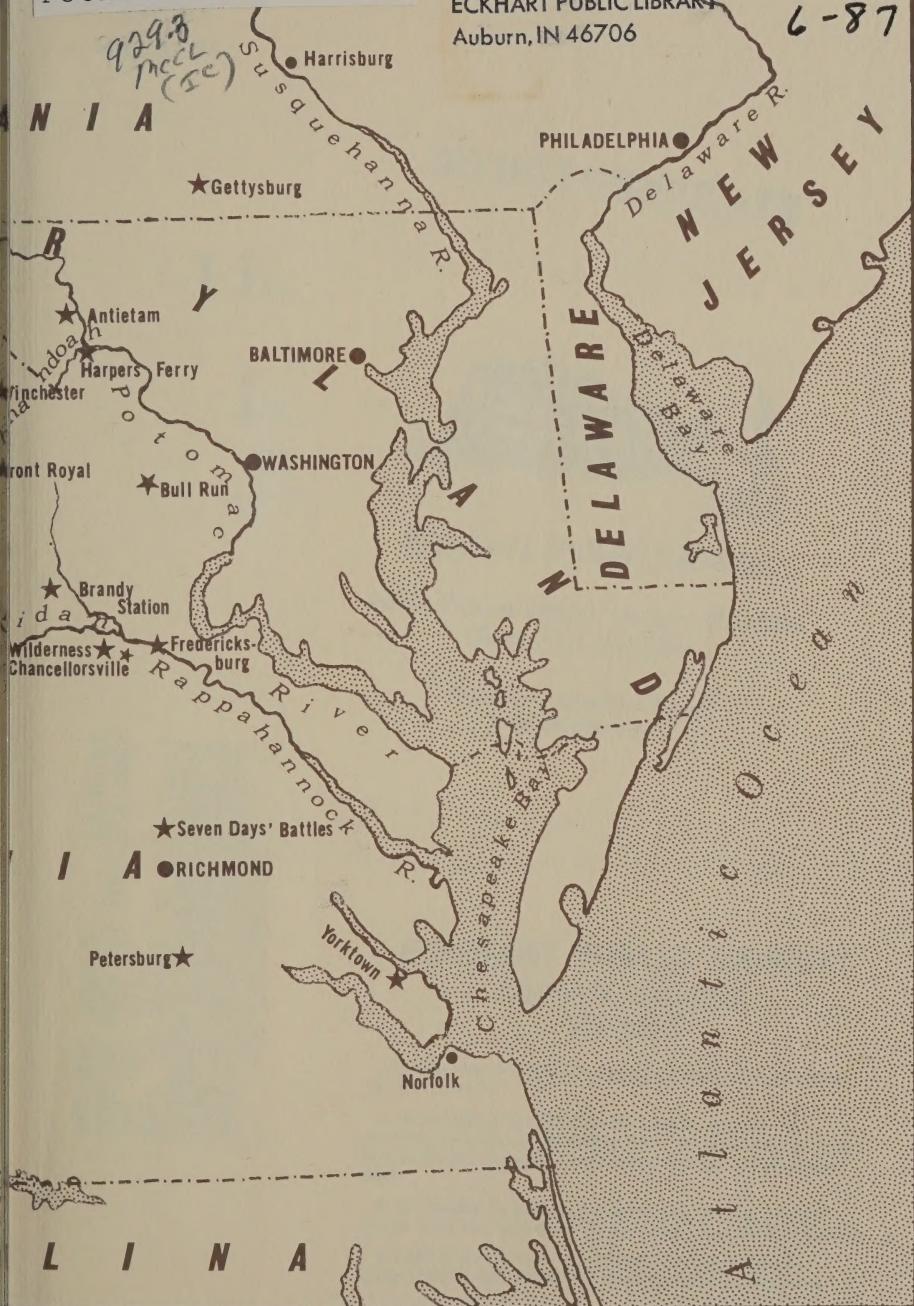
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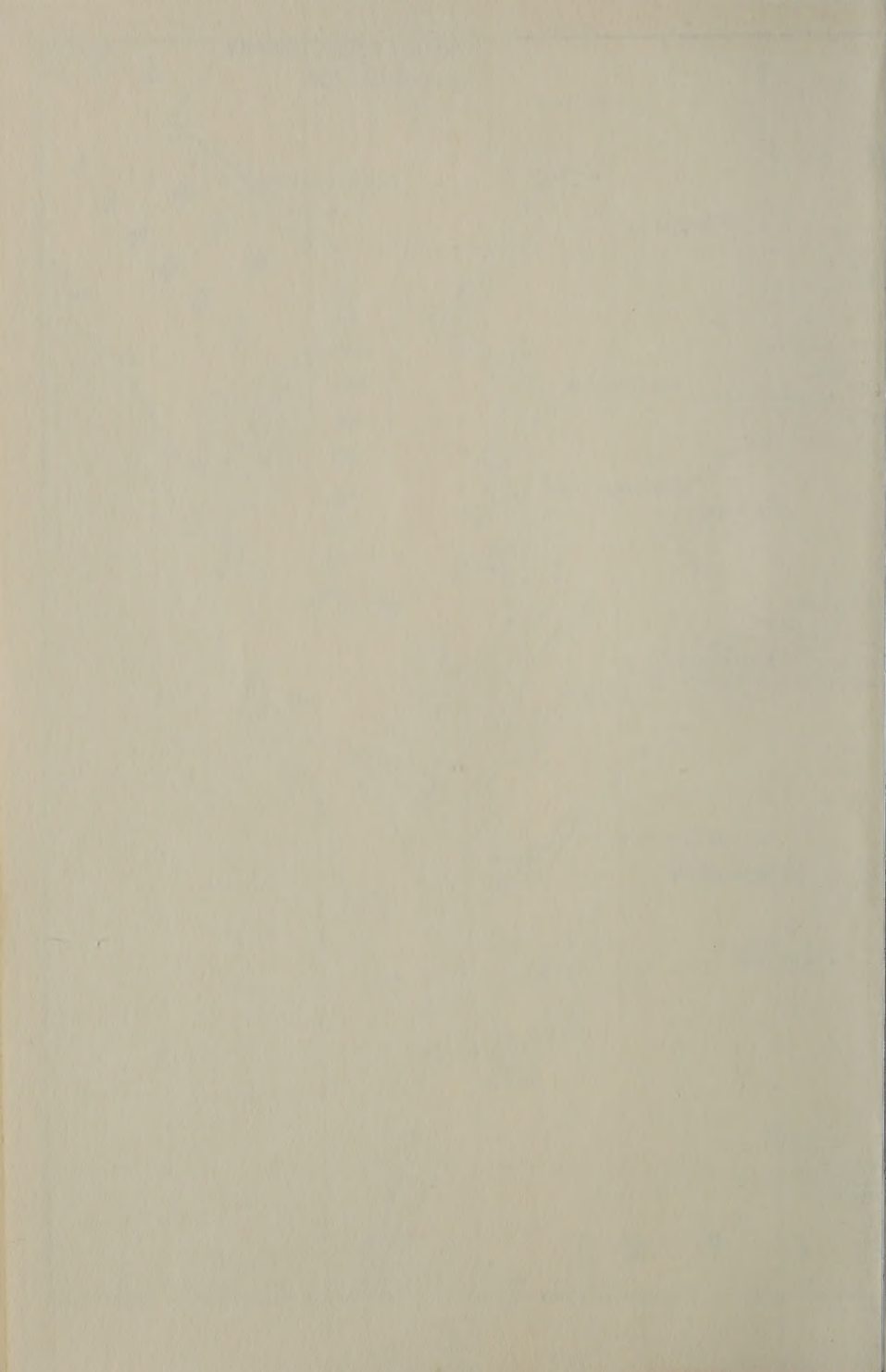
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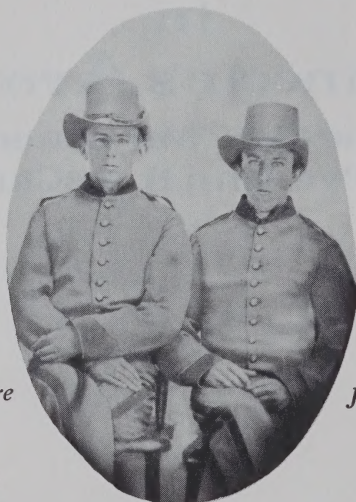
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John R. McClure

James H. Simpson



Hoosier Farm Boy in Lincoln's Army

The Civil War Letters
of Pvt. John R. McClure

introduced and edited by
Nancy Niblack Baxter

Privately printed for the family of John R. McClure as a
memorial tribute on the 110th anniversary of the West
Virginia campaign

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Preface

John R. McClure was my maternal grandfather. He was born five miles from Vincennes, Indiana, on a farm given to his great-grandfather Daniel McClure as a bonus for service in the Revolutionary War. I went to live with my grandfather when I was three years old, upon the death of my mother, and heard many times of his exploits as a private in the Fourteenth Indiana Volunteers in the Civil War.

The letters in this collection were found in a secret compartment of an old bureau in the farmhouse on the old place, which I now own. They were written to his sister Mary and "the girl he left behind," Frances Anne Purcell, whom he married in 1866.

John R. died in 1923 and is buried in the churchyard of the first Protestant church in Indiana, the Upper Indiana Presbyterian Church, which was founded by his great-grandfather Daniel and other Scotch-Irish pioneers in 1806.

—Judge John L. Niblack
Marion County Circuit Court, Indianapolis



Mary Jane McClure, about 1900

Introduction

In the spring of 1861 a steady stream of young men made their way through the valleys of the Wabash on horseback or rode railway cars northward. On April 12, Ft. Sumter had been fired on, and these were some of the first volunteers of the Civil War hurrying to rendezvous camp to join Lincoln's army.

Among them was eighteen-year-old John R. McClure of Knox County, Indiana. This book is a record of his experiences as a private in the Fourteenth Regiment of the famous Gibraltar Brigade of the Army of the Potomac—the first Indiana regiment to be organized for three years' duty. John R. was one of the many young Hoosiers caught in the war frenzy that hit Indiana when the rebels first proclaimed independence. Lincoln had called for 75,000 volunteers, and almost as soon as the word reached southern Indiana, John R. and his cousin James ("Bud") Henderson Simpson had packed their satchels and headed for Terre Haute to help crush the traitors and to "see the elephant"—to experience the novelty of war firsthand.

Lincoln's call came at a time when John R. was ripe for action. Expelled from school because he had set a hog loose to trample up the attic of the schoolhouse, he was tired of the tilling and harvesting on his Uncle Arch's farm and bored with visiting and church socials in the "Beech Woods" community where he had grown up. He and his friends went off to war in the high spirit of adventure, expecting to whip the "secessionists" in a matter of months and return home heroes.

John R. himself seems not to have been very interested in the political and economic issues that had precipitated the war and did not really share the high feelings some Northerners had about slavery. He had seen slave plantations firsthand from a flatboat on the Mississippi, but southern Indiana was strong copperhead territory, and his own ancestors had had slaves themselves in southern Indiana under the nose of the territorial governor. Slavery, for him, was not the real issue, as his later letters show. What was important to him was that the Rebels were trying to tear apart the Union that George Washington and the patriots had fought so hard to put together and, if he could help it, they weren't going to get away with it.

John McClure promised his sisters Annie and Mary Jane and brother Bob that he would write whenever he could, and he kept his promise. Every two or three weeks for the next three years he served in the Army of the Potomac, he sent letters home, frequently using the soldier's franking privilege. The early letters are full of gaiety and bravado. The "Young Americans" of Knox County seem to have gone to war as if it were a picnic, mixing their patriotism with naiveté. They had forgotten what war was really like, and in his early letters John R. seems to think of it only in terms of brass buttons, swords, and camaraderie before a campfire.

He was soon disillusioned. Experiences on the battlefields of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, detailed in the letters, taught him that while war was often adventure, more often it was friendships shattered by guns, muddy marching, and death as sudden as the flash of artillery or as lingering as a foul field hospital in Maryland.

Having gone out hating an impersonal rebel, John R., it seems to me, returned hating war itself for reasons that become quite clear as the letters unfold. The boy who marched out with the bunting waving and the man who wrote a year later to his brother, "Don't join the war, two

months out you will be sick to death of it," are the same person—educated in the bloody swamps of Virginia.

Yet the irresistible repulsion-fascination of war, a fascination Lee described when he said, "It is well that war is so terrible—we should grow too fond of it," was with John McClure fifty years later. Even as he warned his grandson, "Don't go to the wars, John, war is no place for boys," he still relived and savored the details of each of the battles he had participated in.

The letters show both feelings; he loved the memories, but he had hated the Civil War itself.

I have edited the letters only for the sake of clarity and have tried to keep the introductions, which I hope clarify the various battles and troop movements, brief.

Sometime during the first week in May, 1861, John McClure arrived at Camp Vigo. There, as at other central rendezvous points, response to Lincoln's call had been overwhelming. Horses neighed, axes thwacked against wood, and carts rattled as supplies were brought in and temporary housing set up to take care of the hundreds of volunteers until Governor Morton decided what to do with them.

The Fourteenth Indiana Regiment was officially recognized May 7 as a twelve-month regiment but when, almost immediately after that, the call went out for three-year enlistments, most of the men of the Fourteenth responded enthusiastically.

Camp Vigo
May the 7th '61

Dear Sister

Your letter found me in good health and spirits. I was glad to hear from you, you cannot imagine how much good it does me to get a letter. We are most of us going for three years. The one year fellows started yesterday to Richmond, Ind. There was 27 went out of our company; they will be distributed out amonxt other strange companys. We all go together the way we was. We expect to get home as quick as the one year men!

I got a letter last night that *only* contained eight pages. *She* said that she was out at your house last Sunday,¹ said you was all well. I got a box the other day from home that had some nice kake and pie etc. It was very nice. We are going to be sworn in today or tomorrow and then someof

1 "She" being Frances Purcell, his future wife.

us will come home. The colonel said all of the three year men could come home but we cannot all come at once; we can stay three or 4 days. Tell Mart Johnson if he wants to go along with us fellows now is his chance. If he will come up here he can have a chance to join our company. I expect we will start for virginna in a week or so. *I am going after Jef Davises scalp!* Sis it is to hot for me to write any more at pressent. Give my best respects to all the folks. Write soon,

Yours Truely

Mr. John R. McClure

Tell Miss Ann I think she might write me a letter. You must not make so many excuses in your letters.

The new private expected that he would be in front-line action in Virginia within a week's time. Actually, plans called for the regiment to move, after a brief furlough, to Indianapolis for training and arming under Colonel Kimball. The second letter discusses the weapons the Fourteenth Indiana received, which were among the first good rifles issued during the war. The Enfield was to become one of the standard infantry arms; it was a .577 caliber rifle, muzzle-loaded and firing the devastating little cone known as the Miniè ball.

Indianapolis
Camp Kimble, June 30th 61

Dear Sister

It is Sunday and I have not much to do and consequently I am going to write a few letters and thought I would write you a few lines to let you know that I am well and hope you are enjoying the same blessing. We have got our tents, six sleeps in one tent. The regiment looks

somewhat like a little town. There is about 5,000 souldiers encamped around Indianapolis, the thirteenth regiment will leave for virginia this eavening, I expect, and tomorow the fifteenth is expected to leave.

Our Regiment (14 reg) will leave soon. I wish we would get off where we would have something to do. I dont like to be laying around. We get so lazy some of the boys cant hardly walk. I expect you folks have fine times since all the bad boys left! Do you have any picnics? Where are you going the 4th? I expect you folks have fine times. I wish I could be down there on the 4th. The citizens of this city are talking about geting up a celebration. I expect we will be invited. I supose Mart Johnson is not going for the war, tell him he had better go. He will see the *elephant*. The old post guards got a half-grown gosling with them they got it down at Terehaute. They say they are going to take it with them through the wars. We are not going to the wars with the old muskets, we are going to get good guns enfield rifles I guess. Have you saw bill Carnan since he come home, he got an honorable discharge. I guess he was very glad to get home. I guess we will get a discharge when ever the war is over. What does unkle Archy have to say on the war subject any how. I expect you have plenty of cherries and mulberries down at your house. I have not tasted any thing of the kind since in camp. I believe I ate one cherry. I must come to a close, no more at pressent.

Yours Truely

Mr. J. R. McClure

Miss Annie

I was very glad to hear from you. How is all the folks at your house any how if you are a good cook I would be very much obliged to you if you would send me and bud

up a nice pie or to in a little box that is if it is not too much trouble. no more at present.

Yours Truly
John R. Mc

to Miss Ann McClure

After the Fourth of July "citizens celebration," the regiment left fully armed and equipped for West Virginia.

The Indianapolis Journal of July 5, 1861 stated:

The 14th Regiment with Colonel Kimball left on the cars for Ohio on July 5, 1861, yesterday at 1:00 P.M. The regiment is accompanied by a corps of sharp shooters armed with Enfield rifles, to act as scouts, advance guards and skirmishers.

Over 200 men in the regiment are armed with percussion-locked muskets altered from the old fashioned flint lock and the remainder are provided with the latest pattern of smooth bore muskets. The regiment took 120 rounds of ammunition for each man with it, manufactured at the arsenal in this city and sufficient quantity to do a vast amount of execution on the rebels. We hope it will be used to good advantage.

The regiment crossed the Ohio and after they arrived at Clarksburg went by forced march to Rich Mountain, where they arrived July 11. General George McClellan, who was later to lead the Army of the Potomac, had been ordered to clear the rebels out of Western Virginia. He marched over an obscure mountain road and met them at Rich Mountain in one of the first battles of the war. The Fourteenth Indiana got its first taste of battle from a reserve position behind the lines, and after the victory, they moved on to Cheat Mountain.

The spirit in the next two letters, one from John R. McClure and one from his cousin "Bud," is still jocular and mocking. Bud urges a friend from the Beech Woods to join them in the "sport" of military action:

Cheat Mountain Summit
18th Aug (1861)

Dear Cousin

I have delayed writing to you so long that I am almost ashamed to commence; But better late than never, besides I want to hear from you, how all the "Young Americans" are getting along. I have not heard from one of them (excepting you) since I left home the last time. I hear that you have had several partys lately. How I would like to see you all together again. I hope I shall have the pleasure of meeting you all again; But I am afraid that the time is far distant. I suppose the "Young Americans" will call themselves ladies and jentlemen, by the time we get back. I suppose "Mart" is splurging about as usual, talking of going to war and all that kind of thing; but "Mother" wont let him. Tell him that without he is very keen for the war, he had better let soldiering alone; For he could not go to see the Girls nor eat any apples and peaches or any-thing else good to eat or drink. This would go too hard with the poor boy. I have not spoken to or seen a girl for six weeks. They are a "skase" article out here. But although we are deprived of conveniences and pleasures, yet the men are in fine spirits and enjoy good health. In fact I do not believe that there are more than three or four sick (they are not dangerous) in the whole Regiment. We have not lost a man by sickness since the Regiment was mustered into service, But, one of the sargents in Capt Woods company was killed as he was going around trying our guards after night to see if they would shoot. They told him to halt but as he would not they shot him thinking he was a Rebel. Another man of Capt Woods company (Wm. Wilkison) was killed while out scouting besides two or three cavalry men from a company attached to our Regiment. This is all we have lost as yet. But we have amply revenged their loss. One of men

(Summerfield from Evansville) while out on a scout day before yesterday killed one of the scamps and severely wounded another. Yesterday evening about seventy five of our men went out. They came upon a party of the Rebels early this morning. They pursued them killing nine of them and wounding several other. Our men while pursuing them ran almost into their camp before they knew it but our men retreated without losing a man. Our men all come in this evening. They brought in three splendid horses and nine guns which they took from the F.F.V.'s. They report that this enemy is encamped on Green Brier river twelve miles from here. There are about two thousand of them. Our men when they pursued the squad of cowards killed two of the rebels after they had got into their camp in sight of their whole force. They fired at our men and

The valley of the Shenandoah



although some of the balls whistled close enough to our "boys" heads to make them dodge yet none of them were hurt and all are now safe in camp.

It would make you laugh to see our camp. It has been raining so much (it has been raining all morning) that we had to pave our streets with stone to keep out of the mud. Ten of us have built a log house to cook in, we have good chimblly which draws well. Our house is built of spruce fir logs and covered with spruce bark. It is a very good covering and keeps every thing dry. It seems more like home on a cold rainy day. We sit by a bright fire in a dry house (Shantys we call them) and cook our meals. How I would enjoy a dinner at home now for I have not set down at a table to eat for six weeks. But nevertheless we have plenty to eat and we know how to cook it.

(This portion of the letter was not signed, but evidently was written by I. H. Simpson)²

Dear Sis,

While Mr. Simpson is writing I thought I would write a little to. I am well at pressent and have been ever since I left home. This is an awful nice country out here, nothing but rocks and big hills, for all that we are doing very well. I suppose you heard of the *battle*³ out here. Bully old battle, next morning the ground was thick with dead cecesionists. The best of it was before the battle the rascals dug two big long graves to bury the union men in but instead of the union men being buried in it the holes was filled with their

²James H. Simpson (Henderson Simpson), known as "Bud," was John R's first cousin (their mothers were sisters—McCords).

Bud was wounded in the fall of 1862 and discharged. He enlisted again in 1864—120th Reg. Inf.

(J. L. Niblack)

³ A skirmish with part of Lee's army.

own men. There is no news out here, we cannot hear much out in these mountains. The cesessionists have all left; if they see a union man they run like a turkey. If we stay here I dont think we will get much fighting to do. If Gen Scotts boys all makes the old secesh get like we have since we have been here it will not take long to clean them out. Tell no more ar pressent. Give my best respects to all. Write soon.

Yours Truly

John R. McClure

if you will send me some old newspapers it will please me very much.

The Fourteenth Indiana was on "outpost duty" from July until October. This meant much scouting and skirmishing, as "the secesh" were "tolerable thick." West Virginia would be a separate Northern state if the rebels could be cleared out of it, and the Fourteenth was involved in the effort to do just this. Typical days on outpost in West Virginia are described in John McClure's next letters:

Cheat Mount Pass
August 23 rd 1861

Sister Mary

I take pleasure in sitting down to answer your welcome letter of which I received a few days since. I am all right at pressent the only thing that bothers me we have most too much rain and it is rather cold up here too. I supose you folks are having fine times now days, eating fruit, water-melons etc. I wish I were there about a week to help you for all we are living very high out here on crackers, bacon

etc. I received a letter from Toad & Mag the other day it is the first one that I have had from home since I have been in Virginia. It stated that you beech woods folks have had fine times here lately going to parties etc. We are doing big works here on the mountain cutting down trees, building batteries killing a secesh evry once in a while, but they get one of us evry once in a while to. I supose you heard about Bill Wilkerson getting shot by the rebles while out skouting, there was a cavalryman wounded and annother one killed at the same time. One of the boys in the evansville company shot his hand off accidently while putting the bayonet on his gun his hand had to be taken off. Our mess has built a hut it goes very well when it is a rainy cold day, and that is all the time you might say. The other night the field officers was afraid of attack had the 17 reg to come up on the hill in the night the next morning I awoke up, put on my shoes, steped out, and who do you think I saw stepping around with a sword hanging to his side? It was dick Hargrave. I guess you know him, he inquired all about you and Ann Mag McCord, etc how you folks in the beech woods were getting along. Dick is 1st Lieutenant in one of the companies in the 17th regiment—he looks as savage as a meat axe. Yesterday eavening we took three prisoners one horseman, one man and a team and waggon and a little boy. They come inside of our pickets before they knew it I supose. The furthest squad of pickets saw them and hid at the side of the road let them pass and then closed in on the dads. The rest of the company has to go to night on picket guard about 3 miles over on the hill towards the secesh camp. I dont have to go, I am a wood chopper, there is 10 choppers in the company & I am one of them.

I believe I will come to a close. Just tell the folks I will be at home in 3 years maby.

Yours Truely

John R. McClure

On September 12, 1861, G Company (the boys from Vincennes) was among those who met Lee's army at Cheat Mountain Pass. John McClure was in the center of the action. The letter complains about the lack of uniforms, which was trying and, at times, dangerous. McClellan's army was ill equipped. In the recent battle several members of the Thirteenth Indiana had been killed by Ohio comrades who mistook them for rebels because they wore gray uniforms. It is not, therefore, surprising that John McClure anxiously awaited the arrival of new clothes.

Cheat Mount- Pass, Va.
Sept 18, 1861

Sister Mary

We have had right stressing times here for the last few days. I believe evry thing has cooled down now. The secesh tried to run us out of our nests but I guess they have gave it up as a bad job, we only killed about 100 of them. It did not take but 2 or three companies to run them. Capt Coons was out skouting with part of his company and about 40 other men out of other companies; I was along with him, we had a prety sharp skirmish (See Vincennes Gazette. Will describe the proceedings) The secesh balls whistled close to my skull I tell you but not one totched it. Jo Cambell had a ball to go through his hat. September 21st—I comenced this letter day before yesterday but did not get to finish it so I will commence again. I would have writen to you sooner but the secesh has been tolable thick about here and the mail could not go through very handy but it has been going through for the last few days. It is not raining now but it rained last night like blazes, was coldest kind. The bloody 14th has not got clothes yet. The colonel sent word to where ever the clothes was to come from and told them that his regiment could not stay on the hill much longer if we did not get them. I got a letter

from Bob yesturday. I will answer it soon. You aught to have been here to see Bud put on style with his new pants that he got from home, evry body saying hellow Simpson where did you get so much pants. My old pants holds out very well. I think they will last a good while yet. If we stay here much longer we will have a big farm cleared for *Old Mr. White*. We are cutting the timber down all around, he is a brother to the White that use to live on our place. I suppose you have fine times now, plenty peaches apples etc. I wish I had about a peck here now; I think I could stow a few of them away. There is not much prospect of a fight with the secesh now without we go after them. I dont think we will get the chance to go for them for awhile, any way it is about supper time and I must eat you know. No more at pressent. Write soon

Yours truly

John R. McClure

Give my respects to all.

Cheat Mountain Summit, Va
October 2 ond, 1861

Sister Mary,

I take pleasure in seating myself in my tent to answer your letter of which I received this morning. Henderson is well, he thinks it is curious that he has received no letters for some time. He got the basket of things which his mother sent him. I got the paper and envelops which you sent me and also a letter from Ann. There has been nothing strange turned up on the hill for the last few days only we have got our long tailed blue overcoats and pants, we will get our pay and the rest of our clothes soon I guess. I wrote a letter to Abe Snapp this morning, wrote

one to bob day before yesturday. I supose you have heard of the great attact which the secesh made not long since. They played smash generaly. We made them get up and howl prety fast. Me and about 60 other boys were out skouting with Capt Coons the same day they attacted our camp. We got into a nest of about 2000 we killed several of them then concluded we had better get out of there. They did not kill one of us.

I wrote you a letter about a week ago but thought I would write you a short letter so that I would not get behind the time. There is only 9000 of us on the hill now. I think the secesh will have a sweet time before long. You said in your letter that you had a great deal of work to do caning peaches and so forth. I wish I had some of your caned fruit out here. There is some talk of us leaving this hill for winter quarters, of course there will be one or two regiments left here but I dont guess it will be our regiment. They say that there may be such a thing as us to be placed down on the Ohio River, I only hope we may. We have a very good preacher in our regiment. I have not much to write this morning and had better come to a close promising to write a longer letter the next time no more at pressent.

Yours Truely

John R. McClure

Camp at Hutonville, Va
Nov 11th

Dear Sister

It is with pleasure that I take my pensil in hand to answer your most welsome letter which I received not long since. I am well at pressent and hope you and the folks are

enjoying the same. There is not much news or any thing else in camp now days. All got quiet since we came off the mountain but we are beginning to want to get away from here as bad as we did off the mountain. Us boys would like to get into Kentucky where humane beings lives. Good deal of game out there too.

What you folks call secesh. But us Virginians calls them secesh. They are not quite so plenty as they use to be; one thing certain they cant stay in these mountains long, not many of them at least, because the roads are so bad they cannot get provission. And it is the same way with us. That is one thing that makes me think that we will get out of here before long. The roads are very bad now but I think the secesh has a harder time halling their provision over the Allegany than we do. The word was in evry boddies mouth last saturday that we would go to building winter quarters today but today has come and we are not building winter quarters and I am very glad of it, for I do not want to stay out here this winter. I think that we aught to go some place and get some more men. We cannot muster more than 600 men that is able for duty in the regiment, but what is left of us are bully boys.

How are things getting along about home by this time? Is evry thing all right—is there many sweet little men about there? Tell them to be good little boys and take good care of the girls.

How is Andy Purcell getting up at Johns? Does he pitch in as strong as he use to? I tell you he is one of the sweet little boys. Sis I will have to come to a close there is nothing of importance to write about. Write soon

Yours Truly

John R. McClure

my respects to all the folks

Philippi was temporary winter quarters for the army in West Virginia, whose General McClellan had been summoned to Washington to command the newly named Army of the Potomac. For a while at least the war stopped breathing down the necks of the soldiers of the Fourteenth Indiana. For most of the Northern army it was a time of regrouping, with McClellan constantly riding the lines to drill and organize the army that was supposed to sweep up the Peninsula and take Richmond and Grant and his superior officers beginning the course that would end in butchery and bewilderment at Shiloh.

But at Philippi there was time for "monkey shines," with no "secesh" to bother John McClure and his comrades; and his next letter is full of the hi-jinks of camp life between battles.

Camp at Phillippi Va
December the 9th, 1861

Sister Mary

I take my pen in hand this morning to write you. I am well at pressent and hope you are enjoying the same. This is a right nice little place we are staying in now, they say we will stay here all winter. I would not care much if we would. I received a letter from you day before yesturday, was very glad to hear from you. There is not very many folks lives in this city but they are very nice folks what there is of them. I am boarding at a house now and intend to board there for about a week until our cooking utensils comes from Huttonville. Our company has taken up quarters at the court house. We have a gay old time now days, nothing to do but lay around no secesh to bother us. I think you must be behind the times about the news. I heard of Miss Brentlingers wedding about two mongths ago and I dont know whether I aught to have been there to helped her kill bats or not. I think most likely I aught not

have been there. And so Fanny thinks I aught to write to her. ha. Well tell her when ever I feel like writing I will call around. People must think that I have got nothing to do but write. In the first place out here is one of the meanest places to write letters ever was. You can imagine how you could write in a big room where there is about 100 men cutting up all kinds of monkey shines. Tell Anna I will write her a letter before long but I will send her this little book for a Christmass gift. This little book is made out of laural root it grows on Cheat Mountain. Sis, I have nothing to send you just now I have no more to write at present. Write Soon.

Yours Truly

John R. McClure

My best respects to all

The regiment moved again that winter, this time to a location six miles east of Cumberland, at the gateway to the strategically vital Shenandoah Valley. On January 22 John McClure wrote to Fanny Purcell, his future wife, in a letter notable for its description of an arms inspection, for its attempts at more careful spelling, and for its grandiose (or was it humorous) mis-attributing of a quote to Shakespeare.

Camp at North Fork Bridge, M. D.
Jan 22 nd 1862

Friend Fanny

Yours of the 16th is at hand and I have seated myself down to answer your most welcome letter. You cannot imagine how much good it does a soldier boy like myself

to get a letter from old friends. It has been raining here for the last three or four days and you can imagine what good times we are having in our little white houses. We are camped on the Balt and Ohio Railroad six miles east of Cumberland. From the way you write I think the old americans have been playing particular thunder in that part of the country in which you live such as getting married etc. Dan Smith I suppose is satisfied because he has got one of the star spangled banners of the beech woods. Well the captain is going to have an inspection of arms and therefore I will have to lay my pencil down and go. Well my old musket has got some rust on it but it passed and therefore consequently I brought it back and laid it up in the dry to stay there for awhile, not verry long I guess, for I expect that we will go for some secesh before long. We generally, when we start out on such an expedition as that, we start out about twelve o clock at night in order that we may reach our friends camp about day light just in time to take breakfast with them. I got a letter from Tom McClure the other day. He seems to think they are having verry hard times, well I expect they have. I expect Tom thinks that Jordon is a hard road to travel. I would not be very much supriised if there was some other boys in the same fix. Has Deck got that little rifle yet, if he has tell him to take good care of it and when I come home I will come over and show him how to kill squirrels. I told Simpson that you said that you had not got a letter from himfor a long time. He says that he is strapped and got no paper but will write as soon as he gets some paper. I think he takes up most of his time in writing to Miss Lizzie Kelso⁴ I took notice that he got a letter the other day from her that contained about eight pages and I guess he sent her about the same back. You must not tell her that I told you.

Fanny what has become of Andy. Tell him that I would

⁴Whom "Bud" Simpson later married. Decker ("Deck") and Eliza were Fanny Purcell's brother and sister.

like to hear from him, I believe I have no more to write at present and consequently taking every thing into consideration I think I had better come too a close hoping to hear from you soon.

Your sincere friend

John R. McClure

Remember thy creator in
the days of thy youth
Shakespear

Give my best respects to your mother and father also Eliza and Deckar. Bud Simpson told me to tell you that he had not forgotten you.

Letter of J. H. Simpson to M. J. McClure, dated February 1, 1862.

Camp at North Branch Bridge, Md.
Feb 1st

Dear Cousin,

I received your letter last night and real glad I was to hear from you—and this morning having nothing particular to do I thought I would answer your letter. And now if you'll "jist wait till I take a chaw terbacker" I stick my feet up against the jam in the "big room" and tell you yarns till dinner-time.

We have had some very gloomy wintery weather since we camped here; but then it is no more than what we expect at this season. Waked up this morning and found the ground covered with snow to the depth of six inches—But as far as snow is concerned—I don't believe that we

have been out of sight of snow since the first of Nov. for it rarely disappears from the mountain summits during the winter. This certainly must have been a very mild winter or else I can stand cold better than I used to for as yet I havent suffered the least bit from cold; and from now on (with warm clothing you sent me) I bid defiance to old winters coldest blast.

You must have thought we were suffering out from the amount of clothing you sent us—Although I wasn't suffering any yet I was glad to get the many little comforts you sent me—But the white blanket and pants were more than I needed at the present time and having as much as I could conveniently carry without them I thought I would send them home till I wanted them. I think I have enough now to last me till we're discharged. You ought to have seen us pitch into the peaches and black-berries—As I helped each of the mess to some they would remark "that puts me in mind of Indiany"—"who-ever put them up understood the business"—"bully for old Indiany" and other like remarks were continually going around. I found a bundle of long round things in the box couldn't imagine what they were—but when I unrolled them I had to sit down and take a real good laugh. Who would have thought of getting *white pudding* out here—real Hosier pudding. Better believe I wasn't long pitching into it—I put me in mind of the many times I have stood up before the cup-board in the kitchen munching *white pudding*—Hope it wont be long before I stand there again. We thought them Heath cling peaches the best peaches we ever ate.

As for mittens and gloves I have got five or six pair of them. John got two or three pair from some of the girls in the upper neighborhood. Guess I know who they come from. You asked me about my boots. Well I couldn't get them on at first but I got one of my mess to wear them awhile after that I could get them on tolerably easy most too small though. Who made the jean pants they're most

too small but they'll do first rate. Tell ma to keep the other pants till I want them. Tell Ma to take good care of those laurel pipes, they come from Cheat mountain. One of them was made by a messmate of mine who was taken prisoner while on the "summit". The old hat has become dear to me from the adventures and scouts we have had to-gether.

The crackers I present to you all as specimen of the bread we have been living on for seven months.

Write soon

to M. J. McClure

Your cousin

I. H. Simpson

P. S. Tell Ma that I receive all her letters but some-times I get two or three to-gether so she only gets one from me for two or three she writes.

Tell Ma to send me plenty of envelopes and stamps for I ought to answer several letters which I cannot for want of stamps and I will send the money for them when we get paid.

Listen for a big fight soon.

I have got several letters here two days after they were mailed.

Battle was at last a pressing reality again. McClellan, forced into the offensive by clamoring public sentiment and by politics, began plans to capture Richmond. Events decided that he should march up the James River Peninsula toward the South's capital, with reinforcements following.

Lee assigned Stonewall Jackson to block these vital reinforcements and confuse the entire movement; and the "Shenandoah Campaign" that followed was one of the most brilliant of the war for the South. John McClure and "Bud" Simpson were in the heart



Jackson's headquarters at Winchester

of it. The brigade went marching and countermarching, standing and retreating as Jackson evasively moved his small army about the valley.

The Northern troops were "druv like hell"—an expression used by one of Jackson's men but equally applicable to the harassed Union men who were trying to keep up with them. Winchester Heights — Front Royal, Bristol Station — the Fourteenth marched over four hundred miles during the month of the campaign, exhausted, often without shoes and on half rations.

At the end of March two Indiana regiments were among troops that met Stonewall's army at Winchester Heights. The letter dated March 28 describes the battle, which seems to have been typical of those of the Northern fighting machine during the course of the war. Smoke hovering in thick clouds, the whining of bullets and the locomotive whistling of artillery made battle a confusing scene in which it was often impossible to tell who was winning. The men

advanced in lines swearing and releasing their immense tension by yelling "Here's one for Jeff Davis," "buzza"-ing or giving the un-earthly Hoosier yells Indiana troops were known for. John McClure comments on the yelling.

Strausburg, Va. March 28th [1862]

Dear Sister

I once more have the pleasure of seating my self to answer your most welcome letter which I received not long since. I expect you folks has been some what uneasy since the battle we had at Winchester but I can assure you that I am all right yet, there was not a bullet grazed my hide. Henderson got a slight wound in the arm but not dangerous just a flesh wound in the arm. It will not be long before he will be well. It is of no use for me to tell you any thing about the fight because you can read it in the papers only I can tell you that the 14th done her best. The 13th Ind fought by the side of us all yelling like Indians, there was only four hurt in our company. John Conly got his left fore finger shot off. Mike Mulville slightly wounded in the leg. Tom Baley just tipped the side of his head, it knocked him down but he jumped up and after the secesh again. I dont know whether this letter will get to you or not. They have been talking about not letting any letters home for 30 days. Henderson did not get to shoot but three shoots.

I will have to come to a close it is about bed time and I will write again soon

Yours truly

John R. McClure

Mary Jane McClure's next letter to her brother must have complained that he didn't send enough money home. It probably even suggested that he had "gone to gambling." The remarks came at a particularly bad time; John McClure had been marching half bare-foot up and down the Shenandoah Valley without much to eat but hardtack biscuits — "sheet iron crackers." The money he had kept out had gone for food and clothing.

Actually, the Union soldiers were the best fed in the world, they were much more bountifully provided for than the Confederates. Daily ration eventually called for two pounds of meat, rice, coffee, peas, molasses, sugar, vinegar, and potatoes. The difficulties came in battle, when supplies were cut off, or, as in the case of the Peninsular campaign in which John McClure found himself when he wrote his letter, when there were "long marches . . . and the roads are bad."

Hardtack and sowbelly, or the expensive cake and pie provided by sutlers seemed bitter fare, especially when John considered what sort of food the folks back home were eating. "You must reckon that you folks are seeing good times to what us fellows do out here," he reminds his sister.

Camp near Monassas Junction
June 26th, 1862

Dear Sister

I received your letter yesterday. I was very glad to hear from you. I have not had a chance to write many letters home. We have marched about 400 miles since the 12th of May and you may know how I feel by this time. I stood the march verry well. I am well at pressent. Well now for the question, well sister Mary I think that is a verry foolish question that you want me to answer. Another thing I think I know a little more about these things than you do because you never was a souldier, you dont know how things works out here. I supose that you are not aware that when we get on a long march and the roads are bad we

sometimes are fed on half rations and the verry poorest at that. I have been, while on some marches, I would not see a bite of meat for two and three days. Nothing but sheet iron crackers and coffy with no shugar in it and scarce at that. Well if you have money you can get a meals victuals for from twenty five cts to fifty, any thing you buy you will have to pay like thunder for it. I dont think that I have spent my money foolishly. If you get a pair of boots out here I have to pay \$7.00 for them, but I guess that I will go to wearing old government shoes and keep my feet wet half the time. Just a suspose to send my little old \$13.00 dollars a month home. And another thing the way you write it seems as though you dont put verry much confidence in me, you are afraid I will go to gambling. I thought that you knowed that I had more sense than to gamble my money away. You never knowed of me gambling while at home or out here either. You must reckon that you folks are seeing good times to what us fellows do out here.

I have no more to write at the present.

Write soon to your Brother

John R. McClure

Jackson's campaign to divide the troops attacking Richmond worked inordinately well. McClellan was turned back almost at the gates of the city in the "Seven Days Battles." The Fourteenth Indiana arrived by water just at the close of what John McClure describes as the "heavy old fighting" which ended in a hurried and disastrous retreat to the James River, and here McClellan (and the Fourteenth along with him) dug in. McClellan had lost sixteen thousand men.

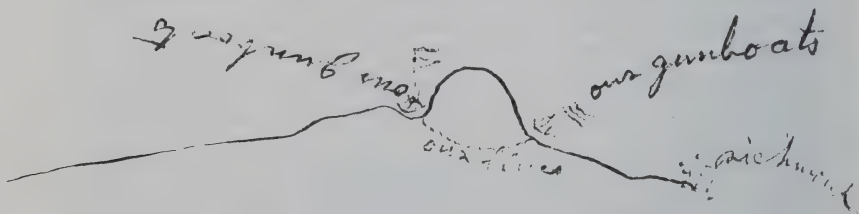
After final skirmishes, Lee's army gradually fell back to Richmond to rest and refit its equally exhausted men; and John McClure began to return to the routine of camp life for a while.

In the letter from camp on the James it seems evident that Mart Johnson had arrived to "see the elephant" and found it a singularly disappointing sight.

Camp on James River
July 13th, 1862

Dear Sister

I received your letter this morning. It came yesturday but I was on guard all night and did not get it until this morning. I am in good health at pressent. Simpson and Mart is here all right. You stated in your letter that you expected that we were fighting while you were writing the letter. I think that you was mistaken you must not think that we fight all the time. We had a little skirmish the next day after we landed here. There was no one killed in our regt only six wounded none in Comp G. Ever thing is quiet along the whole line. The secesh has fallen back I dont know how far though. When we first came here our pickets and the secesh pickets were not more than 150 yds apart. Sometimes our boys and the secesh would lay down their guns and meet half way and talk for an hour perhaps. I nevver tried the experiment. There has been some heavy old fighting just before we came here we are now about 25 miles from Richmond I suppose you have heard of Mc Clellen falling back to this posision. we have a splendid posishon. Here is our posish



Mart Johnson is getting along as well as could be expected. He dont like hard crackers and fat meat verry well. I have not much to write about today as Simpson wants to write I will leave a space for him. No more at present. Write soon.

Your Brother

John R. McClure

Direct to care
Capt Coons
Co G 14th Ind Vol
Harrisons Landing, Kimballs Brigade
Smiths Division Franklin Corps
Via Fortress Monroe, Va.

Sunday morning

Cousin Mary

Tell Ma to send me the New York Ledger and the Mercury every week—I will send the money as soon as I am paid.

Cant get a paper here of any kind for less than ten to twenty five cents. Have nothing to read at all. I suppose John has told you all the news. You say that you havent yet received Marts carpet [bag.] We expressed it from Indianapolis on 25th of June directed to his Mother. I sent a picture of mine in it. Havent seen the original of that picture yet, have you? John accidently saw it he wants to know who it is. Write soon—if you consider this worth answering.

Bud

"Everything has been quiet on the James for sometime now," John McClure's next letter states. Calm had indeed settled on the battle-weary forces of both Lee and McClellan; but it was an uneasy calm for the North. The Army of the Potomac was split into two sections, and Robert E. Lee was preparing to follow up the advantage he had gained from the sudden, brilliant "Seven Days" victories by taking the offensive. His plan was to keep the two armies from uniting—to dispose of both separately.

In Washington the new commanding general, Halleck, uneasily contemplated the split and ordered McClellan back to join General Pope. The "knapsacks have been shipped," John McClure reports. The Fourteenth was on the move north.

Harrisons Landing - Va.
August 14 th 1862

Dear Sister

I received your letter the other day was verry glad to hear from you. It found me in good health and I hope when these few lines reaches you they will find you enjoying the same. Mart he is getting along verry well. Ever thing has been quiet on the James for some some time. I think we will make a move from here before long. I dont know where all of our knapsacks have been shipped on the boats and I supose we will follow soon. I have not much to write this morning. Capt Coons is Comander of the regt. I met with a little bad luck yesturday. I lost my pocket book with about \$15. in it and besides a \$20. note I had on one of our boys but it is good any how. I sent \$30. home to Unkle bob I dont know whether he has got it or not but I supose he has by this time.

No more at pressent.

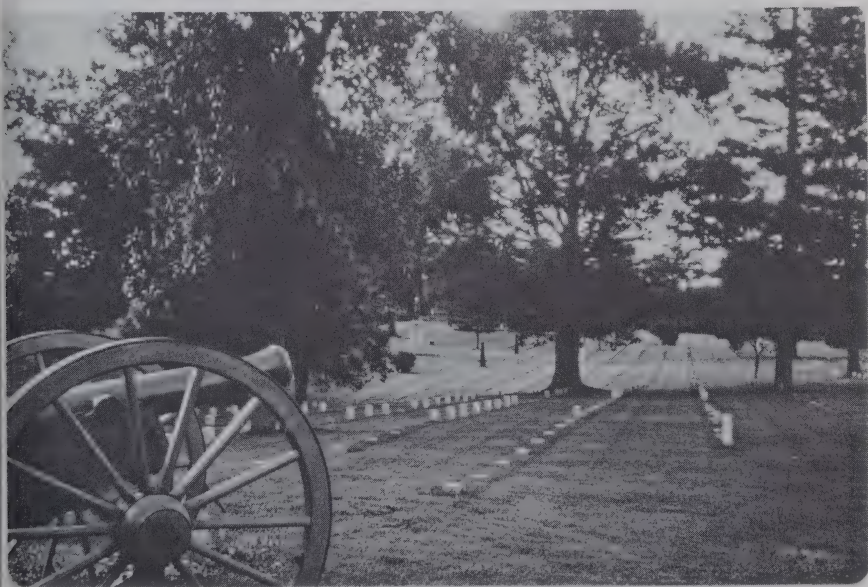
Your Brother
Jno. R. McClure

Harrison's Landing, Newport News, Alexandria—places seen only vaguely, through the dismal coastal heat. The Army of the Potomac at Richmond was moving southward, and Kimball's brigade shifted about again constantly as part of the effort to cover the retreat. For John McClure the moving and countermoving was becoming increasingly difficult; the aguish climate the Fourteenth had just endured without tents, the poor food and the long muddy marches were taking their toll. Seriously ill, he was left at a hospital near Washington while his comrades pursued Lee into Maryland and attempted to stop his seemingly irresistible sweep northward.

While John McClure rested as best he could in the poorly ventilated, damp, makeshift hospital, his comrades amassed in the fields overlooking Antietam Creek. It was time again for battle.

A week later, with a soldier's instinct, John McClure was to call the Battle of Antietam "one of the hardest fought battles as ever was known on the American Continent." At that time final casualty figures were not known; later historians called it the bloodiest single

Fredericksburg today



day's fight in the entire Civil War. The Union lost over twelve thousand men in the cornfield, "Bloody Lane" and "Burnside's Bridge" and the Confederacy lost almost as many. It was, as a matter of fact, at "Bloody Lane" that John McClure's brigade got its nickname. General French called it "the Gibraltar Brigade" because it was the only part of the Northern line that did not give way during the battle. The ditch was filled with dead and wounded, but the Fourteenth and its sister regiments fired on.

John McClure's estimate that "the secesh got badly whipped" proved, in the long run, accurate. Although McClellan's glaring tactical errors and failure to press his advantage into a final destructive attack left Lee's army still extant, the bright dream of Northern conquest was over. The first invasion of the North was at an end, and from this point on, the way was all downhill.

Unfortunately, John McClure could have no way of knowing this yet.

Washington Co, M.D.
Sept 24th 1862

Dear Sister

I received your most welcome letter some days ago I was verry glad to hear from you. We had a verry hot time out here last Wednesday, there was one of the hardest fought battles as ever was known on the American Continent. As luck would have it I was not in the fight I was left at Rockville near Washington sick but I am getting stout now. I am not with the regt now. I am staying at the Hospital near the battle field with our Wounded boys. Our company had two men killed and eleven wounded, Capt Coons was Wounded. Thomas Thompson was shot with a musket ball above the ankle one bone in his leg is broken. The other boys are not badly wounded; you are not acquainted with them. John J. Tanderman was killed, also R. N. Kelso, they were both killed dead on the field. To take it all together the secesh got badly whipped. Our regt went

into the fight 400 strong and come out with 210 sound men, that was killing and wounding nearly half. I have no more to write at present.

Give my best respects to all the folks and tell them I am all right. Mart and Bud Simpson was not in the fight.

Write soon to your Brother,

John R. McClure

After the carnage at Antietam, McClellan delayed six weeks in inaction, and an impatient Lincoln sent him into retirement and summoned Ambrose E. Burnside to take command. The honest but unimaginative Burnside decided to challenge Lee at Fredericksburg, a historic town on the Rappahannock River in Maryland. Lee, however, outwitted Burnside and secured his veteran troops high on a hill. Burnside refused to change his battle plans and on December 13 ordered the Northern forces, led by the Gibraltar Brigade, to advance to what even they knew was certain defeat.

John McClure was still too ill to fight. He was left behind, across the river from Fredericksburg in camp in a scene of chaos, with stretchers being readied, reporters bustling about, and, on the other side of the river, the gleam of rifles blue-bright in the sun as the men prepared to advance toward Marye's Heights and the impregnable Confederate defenses.

When news of the battle began to trickle in with the wounded returning to camp, it was grim indeed. The battlefield was a field of blood where Union soldiers had formed breastworks with the bodies of their fallen comrades. In the area where the Fourteenth fought, some nine thousand men fell. The scene around John McClure in camp at Fredericksburg must have been almost as horrible: amputations were performed before the eyes of those waiting to join the attack and the skies were deep amber from the clouds of smoke above the battlefield.

"We got whipped like thunder," the shaken farmboy says after having lived through Fredericksburg. Stricken with desolation bred

of personal illness and the string of defeats the army had experienced, he goes on to prophesy disaster for the North. Fredericksburg was a low point of the war for John McClure, as well as for many others in the Army of the Potomac.

It was time to retreat again. With gale-force winds and driving rain at his back, John McClure slogged through the mud along the banks of the Rappahannock, dreaming of "Christmas at Uncle Arches" and "hot buiskets," at home in Indiana.

Camp near Fredricksburg
Dec 19th 1862

Dear Sister

It is with pleasure that I seat my self down this morning to write you a few lines to let you know that I am still alive I have been under the weather for some time but I am getting better now. We had a big fight over here, got whipped like thunder. I was not able to be in the fight. Jno McClure⁵ could not be found on the battle field I guess he is killed or taken prisoner but I am afraid he is dead. He is the only one missing in our company.

Sis I dont know what you think about the war but I will tell you what I think and that is the north will nevver whip the south as long as there is a man left in the south. They fight like wild devles. Ever man seems determine to loose the last drop of blood before they give up but there is no use of you and I talking about the war because we cant end it, but I dont care how soon it is stopped. Christmas will soon be here I would like to be at [home.] I think I would get a pack of crackers and go down to unkle Arches and pop them but in stead of that I am out here in Va eating hard crackers and bacon but I hope the time will

⁵ A distant relative of John R's. At the time the Fourteenth was mustered in, "Grandpa" added "R" as his middle initial to avoid confusion with the several other John McClures in the regiment. (John L. Niblack)

soon come when I can eat hot buiskets to. Tell Henderson⁶ that Sol Gundersun is Orderly. I would like to hear from him I wrote a letter to him not long ago.

I have no news to write to you. I will stop writing for the present hoping to hear from you soon. I ever remain your affectionate brother

Jno R. McClure

Give my best respects to all the folks tell them to write. I have not received a letter from any one for a long time.

Burnside had said he didn't have the makings of a general, and Fredericksburg had proven he was right. He was removed from command, and the Army of the Potomac settled into its miry winter quarters near Falmouth where there was "nothing to be seen, only big-headed officers and big guns."

Not all the bitterness in camp was directed at poor food, losses in battle, and the rain seeping in through the cracks in the log huts. Some of it had political overtones. Because he had no one else to curse, John McClure began to curse "old Abe" and his recent Emancipation Proclamation. He had not volunteered to "free those colored gentlemen" for the "nigger lovers," he had joined to save the Union. Actually, he could not be blamed; thousands of soldiers wanted no part of radical emancipation (it had not really been an issue in the early days of the war) and felt they had been hoodwinked by the politicians. And if John McClure had come to regard the poor slave as a part of his own three years of stern duty and hardship, and to wish he had never existed, it was understandable.

The January letter seems desperate; the comments in it are caustic and uncharacteristic, the gloomy threats of a soldier whose soul and body are weary with defeat.

⁶ Both 'Bud' Henderson Simpson and Mart Johnson seem to have been discharged after Antietam. John McClure, who discusses the discharges in the Jan. 2 letter, seems vague about the details.

Camp near Falmoth
Jan 2nd, 1863

Dear sister

I received your most welcome letter the other day. I was very glad to hear from you. I am tolaible well at present. I wrote a letter to you about two weeks ago, I expect you have got it before this.

What kind of Christmas and New Year did you have. I expect you certainly had a better time than I. I had fat pork and crackers for dinner and crackers and fat pork for supper. What appears to be the matter with Henderson, was he discharged on account of his wound or what kind of sickness? What has become of Mart Johnson? I did hear that he got his discharge if he has got it I say bully for him because I think the Union is about played out. I use to think that we were fighting for the union and constitution but we are not. We are fighting to free those colored gentlemen. If I had my way about things I would shoot ever nigger I come across.

I am thinking if old Abe makes his words true you folks will have an awful bad smell amonxt you by the time we get home, get all the niggars on an equality with you. But I dont think old Abe and all the rest of his nigger lovers can free the slaves because the south has a little to say about that. Old Abe has got to whip the south first and that is a thing that he will not do very soon. Well that is enough about the war. How is things in old Indianna by this time. I want you to write to me and post me all about the times at home. There is no use talking about me writing an interesting letter out here for there is nothing to be seen only big headed Officers and big guns.

Tell Miss Ann I think she might stick a few lines in your letter and send to me.

I believe I have no more to write at present. Write as soon as you can to your Brother

Jno R. McClure

Give my best respects to all.

I heard that Isack Purcell was killed and robbed. Trent Landon saw a tellegraph dispatch to that effect anyhow. Is there any thing of it—

By the time of the next letter spring had come to Maryland and John McClure's spirits had improved. "Sis, I was demoralized last winter," he admits and shows her he is back to normal in a letter filled with jokes and bright reports of the visit of Governor Morton of Indiana to the camp.

One dread remained to him—he had been told that he might have to march again. Weak from the dysentery and weighing only 110 pounds, he feared he would not have the strength for a sustained march. But the roads were already drying and the schemes of General Joe Hooker, new commander of the Army of the Potomac, were well underway. He had determined to take Richmond from the north via a long march up and across the Rappahannock and Rappahannock Rivers to Lee's rear. John McClure's fears were realized; on April 28 the regiment packed up and moved toward the river fords.

Falmoth, Va. April 1 st, 63

Dear Sister

It is with pleasure that I seat my self this windy morning to write you a few lines to let you know how I am getting along.



Fredericksburg at sunset. On the horizon the hill where the field hospital was established.

I am in verry good health at pressent and I hope these few lines may find you enjoying the same blessing.

I think that I answered your last letter but probably you did not get it and I thought I would write another one. We are having verry good times out here now but we may have to march soon but I hope not for I never did like to march. I expect the reason that you have not written, you wanted to let all the folks get married in order that you might tell me about it all in one letter but I guess if they have not got three hundred \$ they will have to come out any how. I do think that there has been more folks married since I left than was ever heard of before. I never get a letter from any of the girls but what some one is married. Sis I was demoralised last winter in fact I did not think that I would

ever be fit for service any more. I just felt like that I did not care for any thing union or no union, of course I will not be able to stand the marching like I have done but in time I think I will be as stout as ever.

Governor Morton was out to see us the other day; he made a short speech to our regt. He told us that the old regt would be filled up with conscripts. I think that will be about right. I wont ask them to go through any more than we will. I have no more to write at present. Write soon to your Brother

Jno R. McClure

Tell Henderson I would like to hear from him, he owes me a letter.

J.R.

General Hooker had ordered pack mules instead of wagons to carry supplies, and with the soldiers prodding them, the mules crossed the Rappahannock in a wild race to outmaneuver Lee. It was Hooker, however, who was outmaneuvered.

Seventy thousand troops massed around Chancellorsville, and Hooker was ready to push on into open country half a dozen miles to the east where he could meet Lee. But Lee, whose cavalry had sped toward the scene, controlled the roads all around Chancellorsville, and confused Hooker. He had not expected to find rebels so soon and, his nerve failing him, he took up a defensive position at Chancellorsville and waited apprehensively.

May 2, in a brilliant display of tactics, Lee sent Stonewall Jackson around Hooker's flank in a concealed march. At six p.m. Jackson met the unfortunate troops of O. O. Howard's XI Corps, while John McClure and the rest of the Fourteenth Indiana watched through the smoke and confusion from a reserve position near Hooker's headquarters. The powerful rebel troops carried all before them, and the XI crumbled and fled. The moon rose on a scene of hellish firing and confusion around the usually peaceful Hazel Grove and Fairview Cemetery, where the Federal artillery finally stopped the rebel

advances. Jackson had gained an outstanding tactical victory, but he was not to be allowed to enjoy triumph. As he reconnoitered along the roads near the cemetery, his own men shot him by mistake in the darkness.

The next morning the Gibraltar Brigade marched to the front. Their general Hooker was squarely between the two halves of Lee's army and caught in the crossfire of artillery. The clearing at Chancellorsville became a holocaust. The Fourteenth, on the right during the heat of the battle, charged the enemy but was soon driven back with seven killed, fifty wounded and two missing. John McClure "never got even a scratch," and retreated with his division back over the Rappahannock fords to Falmouth.

Camp near Falmouth Va
May 10 th - 1863

Dear Sister

It is with pleasure that I seat myself this beautiful morning to let you know that I am all right. I was in the fight never got even a scratch. I will not have time to write much. Colonel Coons is going home and I thought I would send a few lines to let you know that I was well and hearty. Give all the folks my best respects and tell Henderson to write to me.

From your Brother

Jno R. McClure

Write Soon.

Hooker's forces settled in to guard the Rappahannock, but Lee was not long in making up his mind to move decisively. Northern Virginia was barren of food and his victorious troops were eager to

strike again. He could only lose ground by waiting; thrust forward he must, into the very heartland of the North in Pennsylvania.

Hooker, like the four others before him, fell victim to his own inadequacies and political intrigues and was replaced by General George Meade, a hard-nosed soldier, who moved the army rapidly north in pursuit of Lee.

On June 12 John McClure senses that the Fourteenth will soon cross the river and join the chase. He is watching scouting balloons which the "Rebs" are close enough to shoot at.

Two days later the Fourteenth began to march. Crossing the Potomac at Edward's Ferry, they marched through terrible heat by way of Frederick City toward a rendezvous with "carnage indescribable" at Gettysburg—the most famous battle of the Civil War.

Camp near Falmoth, VA
June 12 th, 63

Dear Sister

I received your letter three days ago it found me well and hearty and I hope these few lines may find you enjoying the same. News is very dry out here not much going on. Our regiment presented General French with a fine sward the other day, it cost three hundred and twenty five dollars. I tell you it made the old fellow wink. We are under marching orders one half of the time, I dont know how it will be yet, we may have to march soon and we may not. I Just now heard the report of four or five cannon. Our balloon made an assention this morning and the rebs are shooting at it from across the rivver. I tell you the old balloon came down again about as quick as she went up. I got a letter from Tom Thompson last night. He says that he can walk without a crutch. I hope he will get entirely well, he seems to talk as though he would like to come out to the army again. I think he had better stay where he is. In your last letter you spoke of Wicks the fellow that was at home on a furlough. You said that you

suposed that I was acquainted with him. I should think I aught to be he has been one of my mess mates nearly ever since we come out, he is a good fellow to. I have been listening to hear of the capture of Vicksburg. I hope that Old Grant will put things through. I believe that he is a man that will do it if he can. I will bring my letter to a close hoping to hear from you soon.

From your Brother

John R. McClure

Give my respects to all.

Tell Anna that I have not forgot her yet.

The Fourteenth reached Gettysburg on the evening of July 1. The news that met them was disastrous: the Rebels under A. P. Hill had swept down and destroyed Howard's troops and a thin line including the famed "iron brigade" near a Lutheran school, which gave its name to Seminary Hill. The battered Union forces had retreated to two high hills that rose above the Pennsylvania farmland but which, from then on, would have their name written in red: Cemetery and Culp's Hills. It was from here that the defense would be made.

At dawn the next morning, July 2, John McClure parted from the rest of his company. He was left to take care of the wagons, probably across Rock Creek directly in back of little Round Top Hill. The others were positioned but did not see action until dusk. During the afternoon the battle action had moved steadily east, across the Wheat Field and the Peach Orchard and Throstle Farm to the Union Center and Cemetery Hill. As shadows lengthened, the Fourteenth moved onto the hill to relieve Howard's batteries which the Rebels were storming. The Fourteenth charged, saved the important guns, forced the rebels back down the hill, and captured all of the field officers and colors and most of the men of the 21st North Carolina.

And as for the crucial final day of the battle, the regimental history says, "In the bloody contest that took place the following

afternoon for the possession of the hill, the Fourteenth bore a conspicuous part, the Division . . . of the 2nd Corps to which it was attached, bearing the brunt of the desperate attack immediately on the left of the Cemetery. The Regiment lost one hundred and twenty-three men and officers in killed and wounded."

Of this John McClure saw little. "We have had some hard fighting out here, at least people says so, for my part I was not here," he wrote, sitting under a wagon in the rain.

Fredric Citty, M.D.

Dear Sister

I seat my self this rainy morning under a waggon to let you know that I am all right yet. We have had some very hard fighting out here at least people says so for my part I was not there. I have not seen the regt since the fight. The morning before the fight Capt Patterson sent me to the waggons to take care of the company things and I am here yet. I dont know where the regiment is. I did not hear the particulars about our company. I guess there was only one killed that was Will Dunn from Bruceville.

I cant write much of a letter this morning the paper is getting wet now. Write soon to your Brother,

Jno R. McClure

Give the folks my best respects.

The wagons were not to lie dormant long. As the rain fell, horses were yoked to them as the Fourteenth and the rest of the Union Army, hats pulled low against the hail and wind and pulling their cannons over rutted roads, followed Lee in his long retreat to Virginia. When they caught up to the Southern general at the Potomac, however, they turned away and marched to Warrenton; Meade was too exhausted to resume open hostilities.

The next letter is from New York. The Fourteenth Indiana had been sent to aid in quelling the draft riots that had erupted just after Gettysburg when the city's first draft drawing was made. The protesters had run riot and Gettysburg veterans, including the men of the Fourteenth, had had to fire on the raging crowds. But the men of the Fourteenth also found time to see the city and lie around "getting fat."

Harbor
Governors Island New York
Aug 25th '63

Dear Sister

This morning I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know where I am &c. I am well at pressent and us boys are enjoying ourselves hugely. We landed on this island two days ago I suppose we came here for the purpose of enforcing the draft in New York. We came here from Alexandria on the Steamer Atlantic, Had a long ride. Some of the boys got verry sick but I did not. We was on board of the ship for four days. Glad enough when we got on the island.

You spoke to me about sending my likeness to you. I will do it the first opportunity. I would have had it taken at Alexandria, but I did not have verry good clothes. I think if we lay around New York verry long we will get fat. I can sit here on the grass in the shade and see New York & Brooklin and Jersy City all just across the river from us. There is a lot of Foreigners come in here by the ship loads evry week. One of our boys got hurt on board the ship. He was helping to unload the baggage and fell through the hatch hole of the ship from the hurricane deck to the bottom. I guess he will get well; his name is Fred Yocum. I cant write verry much better this morning. We have not got our tents yet. I will write again soon. Tell Henderson I will write to him tell him he had better come

out and see us I dont think there will be much chance for me to go home but if there is any chance I will come. I have got about \$70. laid up for that purpose but you need not look for me until you see me coming.

Old Abe is not giving any furloughs now.

From your Brother,

John R. McClure

After the rioters had been overcome, the Fourteenth joined Meade's army in Virginia. Lee and Meade, whose armies were recuperating from Gettysburg, tested each other by moving and counter-moving around the Orange and Alexandria railroad during the winter of '63, "each one trying to get the upperhand of the other." John McClure's next letter tells of this and speaks out firmly on the subject of his brother Bob's enlisting.

Camp across the Rappahannoc
near Beverly ford, Va.
November 12 th 63

Dear Sister

I received your kind letter written the 2ond. I was glad to hear from you. It found me in good health. And I hope when these few lines reaches you they will find you enjoying the same. I cannot exactly tell you where we are, I know this much we are camped in the woods across the river. This army has had great times this fall running around. Sometime Mead will retreat and then Old Lee will retreat. Each one trying to get the upperhand of the other.

I suppose you girls have great times with what boys is left at home. If I were in your place I would not make much

noise about them. Perhaps they had not room in their waggons for any more or perhaps the old preacher would not let george put any more in the waggon. Sis if you and Tont goes up to Rockville I hope you will catch a beaux. If you go give my respects to cousin Newtons girls. Sis the reason that I wrote that I was comeing home was because we were at New York and I thought that we would stay there for awhile but I would not come home now if I could because it would cost some monney and it will only be six mongths and a few days untill our time is out and if I live I think I will come home to stay all summer any how. If ever bob wants to enlist I want you to keep him from it because it is not the thing that is is cracked up to be. There is not so much fun in carrying eight days rations.

Germanna Ford, where the Fourteenth crossed on the way to Chancellorsville



I dont know that he has any notion, but sometimes boys take fool notions although I can stand it—they cant hurt me—it dont make any difference how hard they march because I never had better health in my life. It is a good thing too because Mead marches men harder on less rations and more wormy crackers than any general we ever had.

I sent some monney home by Sargeant Coleman of our company. I have not heard from it yet. I have no more to write at pressent. Give my respects to all the folks. Write soon to your brother in Virginia.

John R. McClure

While the battles around Chattanooga were being fought in the West and later, as plans began to jell for the concentration of Grant's armies on Richmond, sharp exchanges took place along the Rapidan. The Army of Northern Virginia met the Fourteenth's Division the first week of February, 1864, in just such an exchange at Morton's Ford on the Rapidan, which John McClure's next letter describes.

Camp near Brandia Station, Va
Feb 8th, 1864

Sister Mary,

I received your letter a few days ago. I was glad to hear from you. I am well and hearty at pressent. Our divission had a fight last saturday. Thank God I came out all right. I dont know who many of our regt lost. We did not have any killed in G Company. Thomas Brity was wounded in the foot. We had to wade the rivver waist deep you had better reckond it was cold and then had to lay out all night without any fire. You can imagine what a good time we

had wading the Rappidan waiste deep and the rebbles shelling us all the time. I supose you had a nice time visiting. I would liked to have been along. I did intend to come home on a fifteen day furlow on the first of January but the order came that no one could go home without he would reenlist. I told them that I could not see it. I guess I can wait until the seventh day of June and then I will take a big furlough.

I have not got the box yet but I supose I will get it within a day or two. My mess mate died the other day (Wm Hill) He was sick two days. Poor fellow he was a good fellow.

I have not got much to write therefore I will bring my letter to a close. Hoping to hear from you soon

From your Brother
John R. McClure

I will frank this letter as I have no stamps.

In March the most significant change of all came in the perennially confused leadership of the Army of the Potomac. Ulysses S. Grant, the hero of Vicksburg and the "present idol of the North" (who was also the most competent and dedicated soldier Lincoln had come up with) was given command of the armies. One of the decisions he made immediately was to join Meade in Virginia, to give his own splendid military record and personal charisma to the cause of the unlucky Army of the Potomac.

The record and prospects of that army were a little dreary. They had fought splendidly and valiantly in the greatest battles of the war, but victory had escaped them time after time. Officers had failed them, luck and the weather had gone against them, and now they were, ironically enough, camped only twenty miles south of the spot where they had first started the war.

Grant realized that he had to overcome the defeatist spirit that infused the ranks of the Army of the Potomac and he adopted a

reorganization plan Meade brought forth. Soon Sheridan came in to command the cavalry, calls went out for more recruits, and a great battle plan was drawn. The stage was set for the Fourteenth's final drama.

Camp near Brandia Station, Va.
March 8th, 1864

Sister Mary

I received your letter last night. It found me well and hearty. I had been expecting to hear of Bob enlisting. I dont want him to do it if he does he will be sorry for it. I have told him not to list and if he does it wont be my fault. He will be one of the sickest boys ever you seen before he is out two months.

I wrote a letter to him today and told him what I thought about it. It may all seem to be very nice to be a souldier at home but after he leaves there it wont be so nice. When he gets sworn in he will have to come to the chalk line shure. Out here one regt in our Divission had about 20 such boys come to it as recruits. Old Gen Hays had them drawn up in line and he said that he would like to know what in Hell such boys as them was sent out here for and he had them all sent back home. You had better believe they were the gladdest set of little fellows in world. But it is not often that you will find a General like him.

It surprised when you told me that Charles Hollingsworth had reenlisted. He wrote to me and said that he could not see the point of going as a vetteran.

I think if I get out of this three years all right I will be doing very well. When I get back home I can lay back on my oars for a while any how. I see that Congress has past an act that men that have served three years will not be drafted. You need not be any ways uneasy about me enlisting I have got enough of it for awhile. I did write to

Tom Thompson and told him that I had went in for three more years but I was joking.

Tell Bob if he wants to come to the army so bad to get a job with some officer to take care of his horse or something. Then he can see what souldiering is.

If he is not in to big a hurry, he might come out with Tom Bailey or Boon or some other good Officer and stay awhile.

I have no more to write of importance. Hoping to hear from you soon

From your Brother

John McClure

P.S. Give my best wishes to Aunt Jane and all the rest of the folks.

J. Mc

Camp near Brandia Station Va.
March 22, 1864

Dear Sister

I will not call this a letter I will call it a few lines. You will find a picture in here from your humble servant. It is not a very good one. I answered your last letter I expect you have got by this time. You will find 50 cts in here to by some stamps to send to me. And also \$5.00 that I will make you a pressent of.

No more at pressent. Write soon.

From your Brother

John R. McClure

I sent your picture home to you not long ago. I knew It would get it all broke up. I would like for you to send me your photograph.

John R. McClure

Grant's plan was to force Lee out of his entrenchments to defend Richmond. The Army of the Potomac was to cross the Rapidan fords and go on to Richmond (meeting, of course, Lee's formidable army in the meantime). The net around the Confederacy was ready to be thrown; Sherman would march for Atlanta at the same time and Ben Butler's 33,000 men would move up the south bank of the James, also headed for the Southern capital. Over a month was to elapse before the movement would start; in the meantime life in camp went on just as it had for three years in Virginia.

Camp near Brandia Station, Va
April 3 rd

Dear Sister

I received yours of the 26th last evening. It found me well and hearty. We are still in our old camp and likely to stay here some time yet. Two more short mongths and the 14th Ind. time expires.

You spoke about Tom McClure I don't know any think about how he is doing his business. It may all be false and I would advise you to say nothing either way. Let ever one attend to their own business and us to our own.

I supose Ann has got to be quite a large lady by this time has she not. I am glad to hear that Bob has got out of the notion of soldiering. What position does Henderson hold in his company? I have just come off Sunday morning inspection. We have Church in our Brigade ever Sabbath. I

have no more to write at present. Hoping to hear from you soon.

From your brother

John McClure

P.S. Give my best wishes to all enquireing Friends.

On May 4, 1864, Grant took the Army of the Potomac across the Rapidan. Hancock's 2nd, of which the Fourteenth was now a part, crossed the fords ahead of the supply trains and then were ordered to halt to let the lagging trains catch up. The situation, as at Chancellorsville a year ago, was desperate, and for the same reason. The Army of the Potomac could not get out of the thickly tangled woodlands near Chancellorsville known as the Wilderness. Robert E. Lee, who refused to wait passively to be attacked, was hastening towards the Union forces and would soon be upon them. Grant decided to give Lee the fight he was wanting and settled his veterans of Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and Antietam in and around the Orange-Fredericksburg turnpike and the Orange Plank Road.

The next morning firing began, and Southerner A. P. Hill moved into Orange Plank Road. Grant ordered Hancock's (the Fourteenth's) corps to meet Hill; and John McClure found himself, late in the afternoon, in the center of the attack in a gloomy woods. As the shadows lengthened the troops savagely tried to charge and countercharge.

But the Battle of the Wilderness was like no other one in the Civil War. Hancock described the area as "almost impenetrable by troops in line of battle." Thickets of laurel and oak rose forty feet high from the swampy underbrush and their branches blocked out the sun. Men fired at shadows or stationed themselves behind trees. Years later John McClure was to describe the Wilderness in this way to his grandson:

"It wasn't like a battle at all—it was more like Indian warfare. I hid behind a tree and looked out. Across the way, near enough for me to see, was a rebel aiming at me. I put my bat on a stick I'd picked up and stuck it out from behind the tree—as bait. Then I saw

him peep out of the thicket and I shot him. It was the first time I'd ever seen the man I'd killed, and it was an awful feeling. I went to him and rolled him over. He was young, belonged to the Louisiana Tigers, I think, and he gave one groan and died. I had thought I might get his papers out of his wallet and let his folks at home know—but when I saw his face and heard him groan, I hadn't even the heart to do that."

He returned to the protection of the trees, but within that same afternoon John McClure himself had been shot through the shoulder with a Minié ball and then taken in what he later conceded was "excruciating pain" by ambulance (a springless farm cart) over rutted roads thirty-six hours to the hospital at Alexandria. Actually, he was lucky. Countless others of Grant's wounded had been burned alive in the fire that flashed through underbrush set on fire by gunfire.

It was two weeks before John's wounds healed enough for him to write, and when he spoke of them he played them down.

Queen Street Hospital
May 18th 1864

Dear Sister

This is the first time that I have had a chance to write to you. I was wounded on the fifth, the first days fight. My wound is not a bad one. I got a slight wound on my right breast and a flesh wound through the arm. My wounds are getting a long fine. I think I will be able to come home with the regt. I cant write much with my arm and you cant expect a verry long letter.

Give the folks my best wishes tell Ann that I have not for got her yet. I have no more to write at present. Write soon.

To your Brother

John McClure

By June John McClure's wounds were healing rapidly. He had been sent to Philadelphia and was up and around and viewing the "very clever" folks in the City of Brotherly Love. The Fourteenth Indiana had gone on to Spotsylvania, and just before the letter was written, to Cold Harbor, and although John McClure's thoughts were with them ("Thomas Piety is wounded again for the fifth time", he comments), he would never again see them as an active fighting unit. The machinery was operating to muster him out.

Chestnut Hill, Phila Pa
June 10th 1864

Dear Sister

I received a letter from you this morning, the only one for a long time. Your letter found me well and hearty. My wounds are healing fast. I expect to start for Indiana next Monday (the 13th). I suppose we will be sent to Indianapolis, there we will get our discharge. There is eleven of my regt here, we will all go together.

You spoke of me not writing very long letters. Well at the time I wrote the last letter to you I did not feel very much like writing. Now I am most to fat and lazy to write you a very long one. Phila. is about 10 miles from this Hospital. I have been down once since I have been here. It is a very nice place; the folks are very clever. I suppose you have seen the list of the killed and wounded of Co G. Thomas Piety is wounded again for the fifth time. He has a pretty bad wound this time. The folks in this part of the country dont put on as much style as they do out our way. By the way you talk you folks has a buggy. I dont suppose Unkle Arch ever uses it. Just put it in the carriage house and let it stand there. I wonder if old charly is alive yet. I never thought to ask you. But no time for asking questions now. I think if I keep my heels I will be at home before long. I cannot tell you what day I will be at home. I will

tell you more about it when I get to Indianapolis. You need not answer this letter because I will leave here. I will write as soon as I get to the state. Tell Henry I have not forgot him yet. Tell him to have his gun in good order by the time I get home. I believe I am about through writing for this time. I will write as soon as I get to the State.

From your Brother

John R. McClure

(Give my best wishes to all the folks)

On Saturday, June 17, John McClure arrived at Camp Morton in Indianapolis to be mustered out. His wounds were "nearly well."

Indianapolis
Saturday June 18th 1864

Dear Sister

I arived here yesterday and I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know where I am. I am getting along fine. I dont know exactly what day I will get home. We expect to be musterd out of the service next Monday (20th) but I dont think we will be at home until the last of the week. I am nearly well. I think I will be at home by the last of next week and probly before. You need not answer this it would be of no use. No more at present

From your Brother

John R. McClure

Give my respects to all the folks

Cold Harbor was the last battle in which the old Fourteenth engaged as a unit. When the terms of many of its best men expired in June, the remaining troops were assigned to the Twentieth Indiana, where they served until the end of the war. John McClure's cousin and comrade "Bud" Simpson reenlisted in the 120th Indiana early in 1865, and the last two letters in the collection were sent by him—one to John McClure two months before Appomattox, the other to his cousin Mary Jane just before he was mustered out after the war was over.

Camp Stoneman D. C.
February 7th 1865

Cousin John

Here I am once more on the old Potomacs bleak and barren hills "just like we used to be". I am in some what of a hurry this evening but I'll try and give you an out line our trip. In the first place in going to town that morning I unintentionally took too much whiskey and when I got by a stove in town I got— But myself and recruits got safely off to Indianapolis. Two were rejected. From there I took transportation to Anapolis Md. and started Tuesday evening—Near Knightstown (Ind Central) our car ran off the track but the train stopped before any damage was done beyond mashing some noses. By this we were detained two hours and missed connections at Columbus O. Staid there almost a day—Got on Central Ohio Road and started for Belaire. When we were about 15 miles of that place and while we were going like a streak of lightning the car we were in ran off the track and went jumping along the cross ties some two hundred yards when we upset. The rest of the train ran about three hundred yards past us before they stopped. Considering the tumble we had but little damage was done. One Soldier of the 11th Ind Inf in the seat behind us was killed. Minard Smith had his right arm slightly fractured—It is getting all right now. By this

accident we missed connection at Belaire. Next day we crossed to Benwood and got on the B & O R. R. and on our way through I say our stomping ground at North Branch, Pawpaw Tunnel and Martinsburg. Instead of finding our Regt at Anapolis Md. They were near Washington. We dont know where we are going but think when the river opens that we'll go to Arlington. Thus much for our Soldiering.

It has been storming and snowing all day, but as the Captain and I have a good wall tent and stove we are tolerably comfortable.

Has anything leaked out concerning that scrape of mine with that young lady the last night I was at home? I would not have it get out for anything. Not that I care so much for myself but the injury it would be to her should the neighborhood hear of it. John if you think anything of me and have any respect for her whisper nothing of it. Let me know if anything has got out. Write immediately.

Yours truly in haste

Jas. H. Simpson

P.S. Direct to Co. G 20th Regt, Ind Vol Inf
1st Brigade, 1st Div. 23 rd A.C.

Camp 120th Ind
Near Charlotte, N.C.
May 19th, 1865

Dear Cousin

I suppose you think (if you ever think of me at all) that I have forgotten you; but allow me to correct such an eroneous opinion (aint that a big word). You see I will

drop in on you occasionally, to remind you that I am still "hunk-a-dora" (Shakspear).

The boys are all well—I'm a little better than common—Have nothing to do now but attend roll calls, dress parades, and eat—anything you can get—But it is getting lonesome out here; and begins to seem like loseing time (you know I always made the minutes count) playing soldier—But I have plenty of work to occupy all my time fixing up Cpts accounts, he being back at the hospital. Dont know what to say or think of what is before us—A thousand "grapevines" fill the camp—One says our Regt guards a waggon train through to Kentucky, another that our whole Corps starts for East-Tenn next week—Still another that we'll be kept in the service sometime; and that we soon start back to the coast and take ship for Texas—I guess the sureest guess is to guess nothing at all. There's no telling just now what will be done with us.

I hear you and fat Anna have moved up to the "Old place" to keep house for John—I suppose John has fooled Mrs. Grundy this time.

It will seem so much like old times, when I get home, to visit you up there. It seems but yesterday since I used to walk up there—bare legged-pants rolled up—Dont I remember! How glad I'd be when I got to the shady woods beyond Mr. Purcells, and then when I got to the turn on the hill I'd raise a squawk and start off on the double quick. Maybe some of you would come out to the fence to meet me. (You saw me so seldom)—I can see some of you yet, standing on the third or fourth plank, while your toes stuck through the cracks like a row of turtle heads—But those dear old days can never never come again—But we thought then some times that we saw awful hard times, awfull.

The past is dead—Let the dead bury the dead, while we build castles in the golden tinted clouds of the future. I must smile just a little when I think of the dignified family

at the Old place. I see you all to-night—There's John over there in the corner. His boots are off, one foot's up 45 degrees on the jam, the other stuck out at right angles across the hearth. He's smoking, and as he lazily puffs the blue clouds around him he stares very hard at you over in the other corner. Now he seems lost in the ceiling—I know what he's thinking of—Thinks he will have Mrs. Somebody over there in the corner some of these days—It's after taps—Annie has become sleepy and says "Sis I cant turn this heel"—You, well may-be you're mending that coat of John's—maybe you're reading *The Ledger*—It'll seem lonesome to you at first, yet although I am sorry you left us I think it is a good idea—Think I'll keep Bachelor's Hall when I get home up in Mr. Long's cabin. Would'nt it be Romantic—So "mentisental" after coming in out of the harvest field to go after water—fry a little bacon—&c &c &c &c &c &c &c.

Tell John I am looking for that letter from him. Awful lonesome out here. Don't get letters from any one but Ma & Henry

Write and tell me all the news—and I'll promise to answer you when—the fit comes on If this letter helps you to pass off as pleasantly as much time as it has me it has filled "it's mission"

I remain very respectfully your

Most dutifull Cousin

Jas H. Simpson



John R. McClure, the returned veteran

John R. McClure, venerable veteran, at home with his family. Left to right: Fanny, John R., wife Frances, Frank, and Nancy.



Afterword

John McClure's life after 1864 was almost anticlimactic. He married the "friend Fanny" of the letters and took her to the family homestead, but the shadows of forgotten campfires never seemed far from his mind. He farmed and held public office, and visited with Cousin Bud and his bride, but his real career was attending regimental reunions where the Fourteenth Indiana, its veterans growing older every year, rehashed the old victories and defeats and sang the old songs, eventually managing to surround what had been horrible to them with a mellow, nostalgic glow.

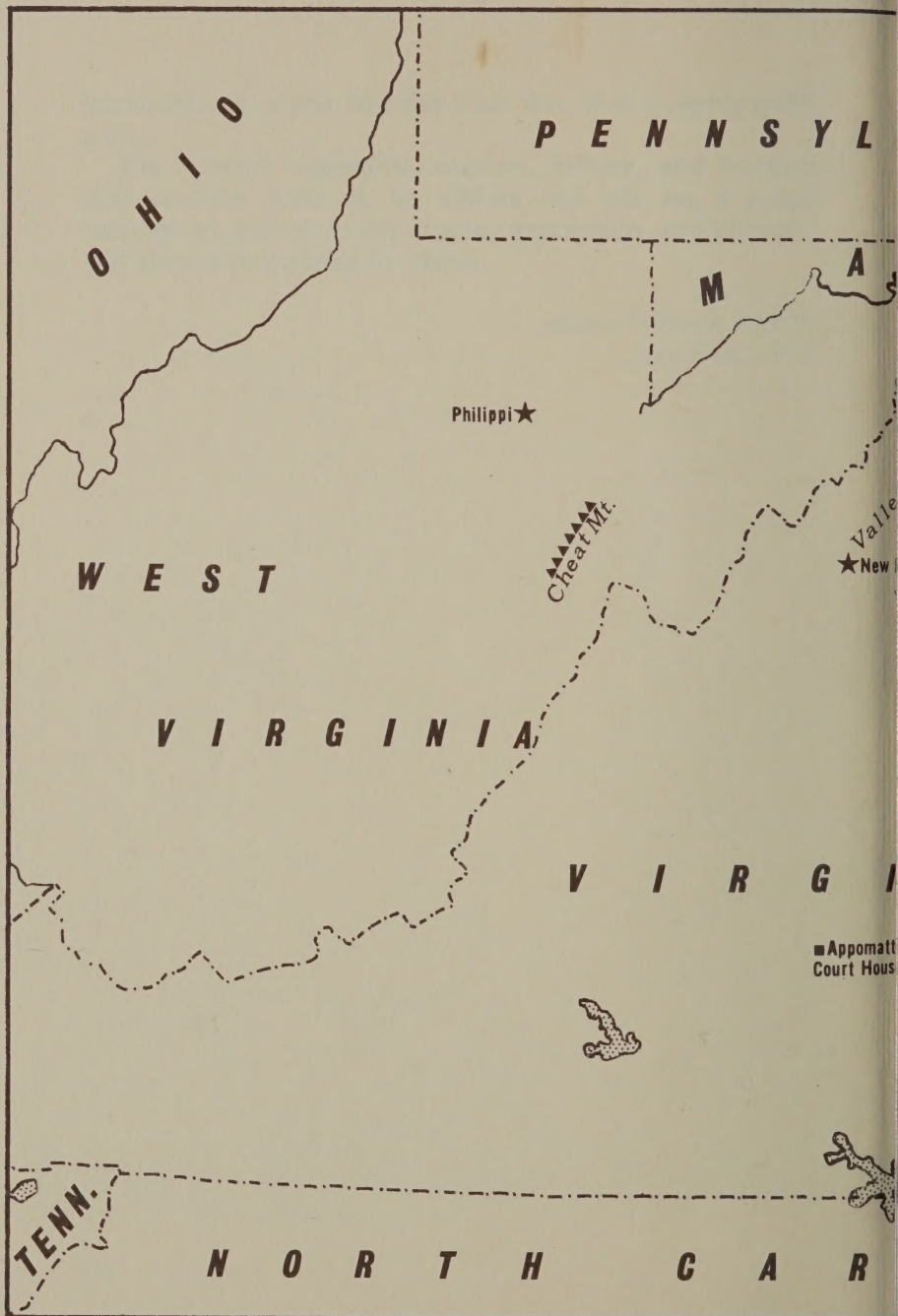
Each year the ranks grew thinner, until in 1922 the Fourteenth had to discontinue the regimental reunions and "hear taps played for the last time," as the newspaper account said. John McClure, whose wife was gone by this time and whose regiment was permanently mustered out, seemed to have little to live for. The next year, echoing the words of Stonewall Jackson as he lay dying after Chancellorsville, John R. told his grandson "I believe it's time for me to cross over," and within a month he was gone.

John McClure did not lead charges or earn promotions. He was sick at Fredericksburg, with the wagons at Gettysburg, and he stuck his hat out from behind a tree at the Wilderness. Still, I think we can all remember him with real affection and admiration for the courage these letters show. He was sick enough after Richmond to have asked for a discharge, as others did, but he stayed on. He did not run or skip or hold back when the firing began, as so many other soldiers did. John R. stayed and lived, and did both

honorably. In a war like the Civil War, that is saying quite a lot.

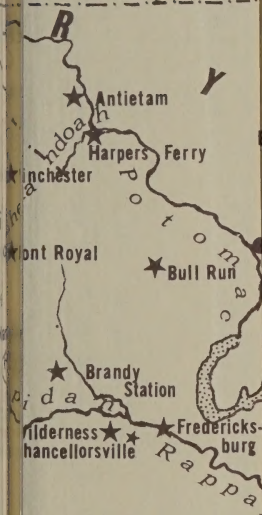
The Yankee ingenuity, caution, humor, and honesty that enabled John R. to endure the war are a proud heritage to pass on to any coming generation, and I know I will always be grateful for them.

Nancy Niblack Baxter
October, 1971



A N I A

★Getty



★Seven Day

I A ●RICHMOND

Petersburg★

L I N

I believe I am about
through writing for
this time I will write
as soon as I get to the
State

From your Brother
John R. McCall

Give my best wishes
to all the folks